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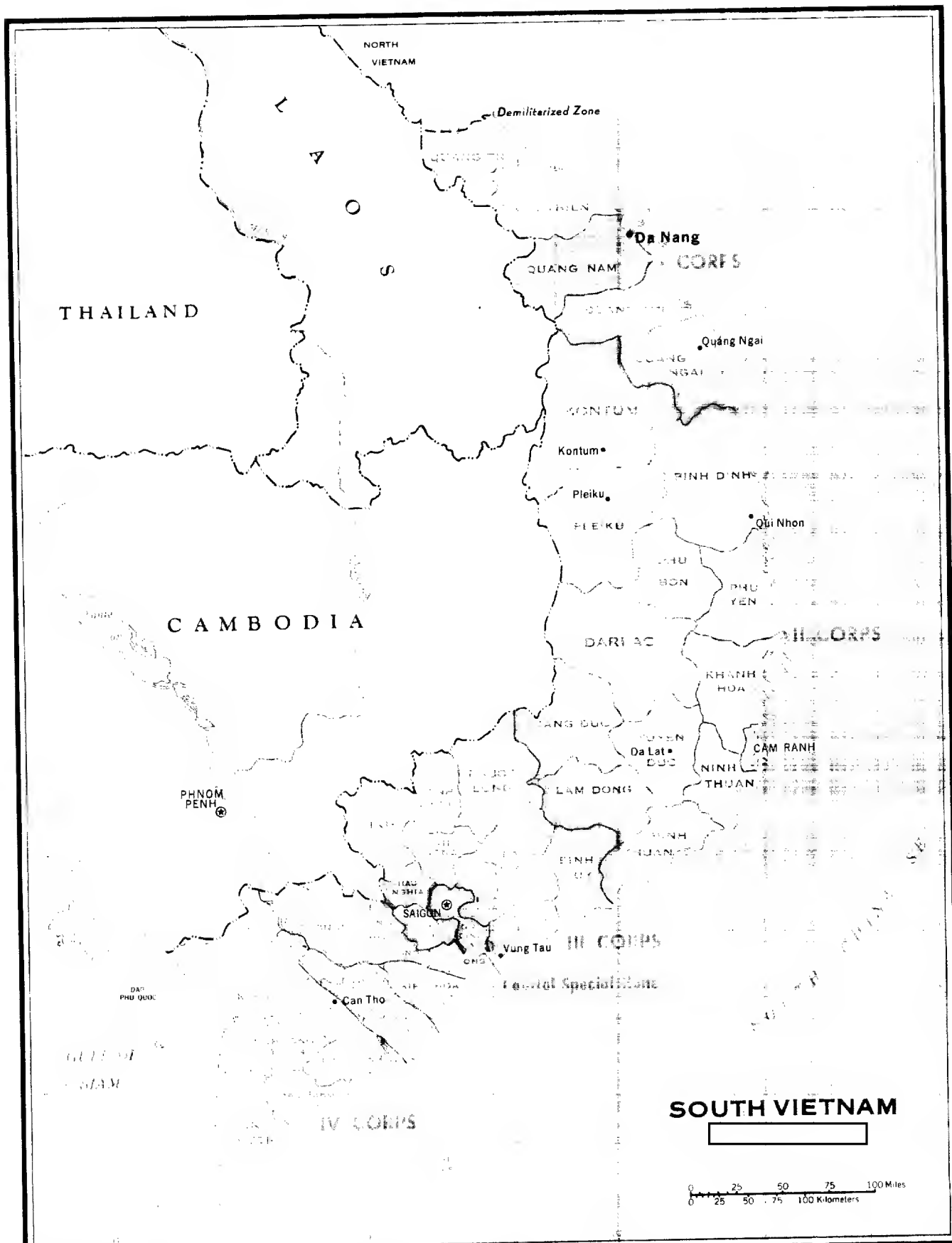
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[Vietnam: There is additional evidence that Prime Minister Huong plans to reshuffle some of his cabinet officers soon.

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[ ] the shifts will take place next week and will include replacement of the finance minister as well as the governor of the national bank. Huong reportedly hopes to eliminate some of the personality friction which has arisen between government departments. If implemented, the shifts should also strengthen the southern complexion of the cabinet slightly, and perhaps improve its technical competence.

For the time being, the prime minister seems to be ducking the issue of any shifts in major cabinet military posts. Reportedly, such a move was under consideration. In part, it would have involved the replacement of Minister of Defense Vien with Interior Minister Khiem, an ally of President Thieu. The Huong government probably believes such a change now would stir up too much resentment among the powerful military leaders in the government.

\* \* \* \*

On the military front, over-all enemy action remained light, although the Communists staged several sharp, small-unit attacks against US positions south of Da Nang and against a South Vietnamese battalion in Hau Nghia Province. The pattern of enemy activity this week seems to follow that of the past seven days in which a significant increase occurred in light enemy offensive activity, as if the Communists were tuning up for more extensive operations in the near future.

\* \* \* \*

Politically, the Communists have hardened their propaganda line on some aspects of a war settlement during the last few days--possibly in reaction to ]

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[the firm allied stand reflected in the Honolulu communiqué and in recent statements by US leaders. Propaganda media in Hanoi, for example, have echoed the tough position taken by the North Vietnamese negotiators during the last session in Paris on their four-point stand for ending the war. During this meeting, the Communist spokesman again insisted that the program of the National Liberation Front must provide the basis for a settlement of the conflict. Earlier, a North Vietnamese Foreign Ministry statement had modified this demand in a manner suggesting that Hanoi would not insist that the Front play the central role.

Contradictory policy statements from North Vietnam, however, have long been a feature of Hanoi political maneuvering. Such statements apparently reflect the tactical situation at any given time, and also serve to retain a degree of flexibility in the North Vietnamese position.

(Map) ]

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【USSR-Czechoslovakia: As the Soviets and their like-minded allies gathered in Bratislava yesterday, Czechoslovak party leader Dubcek had to take time from conference preparations to calm the jittery Czechoslovak people.

Dubcek was clearly alarmed by the "various spontaneous actions and meetings" of an anti-Soviet and anti-Communist nature which took place after the publication of the uninformative communiqué from Cierna and the ambiguous explanation of it by President Svoboda. Dubcek's radio address yesterday seemed to have the desired effect.

He said categorically that Czechoslovak sovereignty is not threatened. He reiterated that the Soviets had accepted the party's action program, and implied that no arrangement had been made for the stationing of Soviet troops on Czechoslovakia's western frontier. Czechoslovak officials have indicated, however, that the agreement at Cierna might entail the presence somewhere else in Czechoslovakia of a few hundred allied officers with supporting and technical services "not exceeding a few thousand."

Dubcek probably also was concerned about the effect of the demonstrations on the attitudes of the party and government leaders of Bulgaria, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and the USSR attending the meeting in Bratislava. During the Czechoslovak-Soviet meeting at Cierna, the press in these countries had been hostile to Prague. After the Cierna meeting was over, the propaganda barrage was silenced.

The Czechs apparently hope that the meeting in Bratislava will be brief, and primarily for the purpose of approving the Czechoslovak-Soviet modus vivendi. Yesterday Czechoslovak Premier Cernik said the Bratislava talks will concern "things which

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[unite us," European security--i.e., West Germany--economic cooperation, and Czechoslovakia's future role in the international Communist movement. The Czechoslovak people have been promised a report on the meeting by Dubcek as soon as possible after it is over--Saturday night or Sunday.

The Bratislava talks will be followed by visits to Prague of Yugoslav President Tito and Rumanian party boss Ceausescu, probably early next week.

There has been no substantial change in the status of Soviet forces in and around Czechoslovakia.

Over 7,000 Soviet troops and all kinds of ground combat equipment including "Scud" tactical missile (150-mile range) launchers were observed by the US Army attaché in Prague on a trip through central Czechoslovakia during the period 29-31 July. These forces represent the major elements of a motorized rifle division and some combat units probably subordinate to the Soviet 38th Army headquarters staff still located in central Czechoslovakia. Most of the equipment and troops were moving eastward in convoys.

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Congo (Brazzaville): The political crisis in Brazzaville threatens the city with widespread violence.

A 6 PM to 6 AM curfew was put into effect after President Massamba-Debat dissolved the National Assembly and suspended the ruling party's radical-dominated political bureau on 1 August. The army has been ordered to guard strategic locations and patrol the city to maintain order. Armed youths of the radical-controlled militia reportedly are also in the streets, and some clashes apparently have occurred.

There is also some evidence that the army may be split, with northerners in the paracommando battalion pitted against southern soldiers backing the President. Brazzaville radio claimed the country was seriously threatened by tribalism, and Massamba-Debat later made a dramatic appeal for national unity in which he pardoned all political prisoners. Some paracommandos were later reported to have occupied the Brazzaville prison where political detainees are held.

The President also called for an urgent meeting of all party section heads and central committee members yesterday. He has not yet announced the membership of the newly created Committee for the Defense of the Revolution, which is to replace the party's political bureau.

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NOTE

Egypt: According to Cairo's semiofficial newspaper, Al-Ahram, Nasir's health has improved after six days at a Soviet health resort. Nasir is allegedly responding well to treatment for circulatory disorders that probably have resulted from diabetes. Physiotherapy will continue for about three weeks, which means that he will not return to Egypt until around 20 August.

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